

Editorials

.... WITH A PURPOSE

THE INDIANAPOLIS RECORDER
 518-20 INDIANA AVE. Lincoln 7574, 7575
 GEORGE P. STEWART MARCUS C. STEWART
 Founder and Editor—1896-1924 Editor

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THE POLL-TAX FIASCO

The entire population of each of the numerous states is the basis for determining the number of members each state shall have in the U. S. House of Representatives. In the southern states, it is likely forty (40) per cent of the people can not vote in a federal election. The people, non-voters, Negroes and Whites are all the victims of laws designed to maintain arbitrary traditions and retrogressive trends of this section of the land.

Southern states perpetuate political advantage not granted or ordained by the U. S. Constitution in the scope of states' rights. The Anti-Poll Tax Bill, killed in the Senate by a filibuster, was a move against the operation of the system of federal elections. Power politics of a subversive minority carried the day against the Anti-Poll Tax Bill.

Notice has been served in this instance, that a real spirit of democracy, "a mock cry of the times," has a small voice in the land. A handful of the ranking leaders of the Democratic Party, on their past records are yet worthy of the faith people. But the Republican Party members of the Senate failed, when the occasion afforded an opportunity significant of the times. The Senators from Indiana, Raymond W. Willis, Republican, and Frederick VanNuys, Democrat, are congratulated on voting for "the rule of cloture." A majority vote of the Senate for "cloture" would have ended the filibuster, permitting a vote on the bill by the Senate.

THE HOPES FOR TOLERANCE

(Reprinted By Request)

The Catholic Church in its spiritual and humanitarian service to mankind reaches every far outpost of the world. During all of the Christian Era, the Catholic Church has served the spiritual and humanitarian needs of the peoples or nations of the earth. The scope of this service makes Catholicism most likely a real universal faith. The Universal Church must inevitably embrace a wider scope of practical Christian brotherhood and fellowship of men, in its far flung program of service to human kind.

The Christian tenets of brotherhood and fellowship of men are the crying need of a world made mad by greed, hatred and covetousness. There is no end to the conditions arraying class against class, group against group and racial attitudes of hostility among Christian peoples.

During all of the Christian Era, wise and pious leaders of the laity and clergy of the Catholic Church have judged the misgivings or burdens of lamentable traditions within their surroundings. The records show Catholic leaders have served humanity generally, wisely, fully and nobly to practical ends, in every age, clime and nation. The practical ends of such service, however, at times have awaited the human responses of society, peoples or nations of some particular sphere of human activity.

Speaking recently before a Catholic Charities Conference in Kansas City, the Most Reverend Bernard J. Shiel, auxiliary bishop, of Chicago, stated, "It is the most dangerous kind of hypocrisy to wage a war for democracy and at the same time to deny the basic benefits of democracy to any group of citizens."

Bishop Shiel again noted, "If the Negro is worthy to die with the white men, then he is worthy to live with them on terms of honest objective equality. The decisive hour has come in which it must be decided whether the favored classes would rather save their pride and privileges or save their country. The opportunity to progress, to better themselves economically, to share the industrial, social, political and cultural life of America—these are the things the American Negro seeks."

The address was made to a Catholic group. Catholics are able leaders in every sphere of human endeavor in our land. Again they are fully a part of the general pattern of social urges or responses. The nature of the message suggests a change of spirit by the American people in general. There is something to be gained, and on the other hand there is something to be lost without a change. In the mean time, Negro people of the land can afford wisely to watch and study Catholic peoples, who follow the leaders of their faith.

Remember when the dark days come, God is only preparing a background for a real heavenly sun.

Some men live by rules; others by faith.

The simple reason why some men are not going to heaven, is because they can't take-off from some evil things down here.

Satan's hands may be very dirty, but there are plenty of poor souls who seem to enjoy eating out of them.

To those who plan on going to heaven, honesty must be practiced down here; too many golden slippers laying around up there, for any chances to be taken.

At the end of each day, be sure you can sing "I've done my best"—and not a thing less.

Don't get into your head you can out-smart Satan; all he wants with you is the very last round.

Before you come into your own, you must really go somewhere.

A pamphlet, retrieved from musty historical files, notes "the first white man to set foot on the present site of Chicago, was a French Negro, Jean Baptiste Du Saible from St. Domingo"—the sands of time are marked with the tracks of but one noble race of men, wherever you go, the dominant group.

The EDITORIAL Page

Weak Men Woo And Await Opportunity—Strong Imaginative Men Make It.—Hibbitt.

Cruising



'Round

...Last "African Mile" Darkest Before Axis Downed?
 Son, Daughter Serving U. S.; Add My "Two Cents Worth."
 Some Fascists Sabotaging the Peace.
 The Great Shame: Efforts to Scuttle Social Gains.
 To H... I With My Ally, the Hot-tentot—Witherow.
 Local Blitz: Business Seeks "Protection."

AS FOREWARNED by the men who are running the war for us, our troops and air force are not having an easy time in going the last 20 miles in Africa, in fact it may be an "axis"—Stalingrad—we pray not, but we must be prepared to hear the bad news and rejoice when and if we hear the good. One thing sure we cannot afford, if at all possible is to let the Axis stay in Africa very long. The quicker we get them out the better. However, I am one of those who is willing to let the Army, Navy, and the government officials run the war.

I HAVE a son in the army; he reports that he is receiving the best of treatment. I have a daughter in defense work; she is receiving the best of treatment. I had a government job but my work was non-essential and was ruled out. Efforts to contribute my meager skill to the war effort have been unsuccessful. Thus I have for the time being been confined myself to helping as I can to win the war—and saving the peace—lest we fight in vain.

THERE ARE forces at work now on the peace to follow the war. But some much of their lingo is double talk. They are only confusing the ideas, in the hope that from such confusion they will come out "on top" or ahead. Such hope of getting ahead is entirely human; with such a hope we have no objection, in fact, we approve of all men striving to get ahead, but there is an objection to methods used to get ahead. It is these methods that we shall attempt to discuss from time to time in an effort to consolidate a workable peace program. Some where between the following two extremes:

1. Economic Imperialism by business as represented by "Witherow" of the National Manufacturers Association, or
 2. Every man a king, as promulgated by the late Huey Long, former U. S. Senator from Louisiana.

Economic Imperialism means that big businessmen have the right without outside interference of any kind to pay whatever wage to work-

er they wish, lay workers off at their discretion, set living standards for workers, fix prices for all things, make as much profit as they can, make only such laws that will increase their profits,—scuttle all laws that attempt to regulate their transactions with the consumer, keep out competition, prevent anyone else from making money that might cut into their possible intake. And to pass such laws as to prevent themselves from eating each other up.

There is yet the thought in the minds of most of our big business men that the ideal situation for business—is—cheap and plentiful labor, cheap and plentiful material, and added to this, that labor paid barely enough to pay his cost of eating and sleeping is easy to control, easier to drive, and to be worked longer hours, without penalties.

THE GREAT SHAME is that this group is afraid to state their side of the case truthfully, as it should be done. Any time an honest issue is brought truthfully before the American people and is accepted, it will succeed. If on the other hand its backers are afraid to let the people know, there is something wrong.

If the National Manufacturers wish to set wages, living standards, break up unions, scuttle social reforms, and control working conditions, let them say so in plain English and prove that their system is better for the people that they wish to support them,—stop blabbing about the "American way," "free enterprise," which today are wornout phrases and meaningless to the vast majority of us. Mr. Witherow comes near to being honest when he says: "I am not fighting this war to see that every Hotentot gets a quart of milk," even this ungrateful statement, while these Hotentots lend their land and bodies to help Mr. Witherow save his so-called "American way," is better than hiding behind a smoke screen of humanity, preaching about an doing evil.

Business is busy now educating our new lawmakers of the state, how to protect their interest—according to Mr. Early of The Star. State chairman speaks to a labor organization, that most of us never heard of before—to reassure labor that its rights would be protected—with reservation. Thus the home front battle is on in full blitz.

JOE HEPBURN: Native Fascists will be wrecked, they only see where they come from—not where they are going.

Public Sentiment

In The Editor's Mail

WRITERS MORE BITING

Editor, The Recorder,

Dear Sir:

There has been quite a change in the Negro world since Carl Van Vechlin wrote a book about New York Harlem. There is far more fight in the colored race than was the case in 1926. There is no longer any craving to have tender-minded whites come us in lordly ways. No longer do Negroes care about being the subjects of books by dilittante whites who have little else to do with their writing ability.

The writing done by Negroes today is far fiercer and penetrating than 15 years ago. It is more bitter and more vengeful. There is no desire to be "nice" in it. Those who read it do not read gentle stories any more. Whether they are more effected by it is questionable. There may be only those who like spicy literature no matter what the subject.

Yours truly,

ED. PETERSON.

CHRISTMAS OBSERVANCE

Editor, The Indianapolis Recorder:

Dear Mr. Stewart:

The Yuletide Season is rapidly approaching and I observed here and there bells are hung, wreaths are placed and trees gleam softly with rainbow lights.

I am wondering just how many people (especially Christians) will actually adopt themselves to the act of considering Christmas as a day of the Christ Child by attending their respective churches on that day.

If it be not possible to attend

church services, every one could at least read the Bible on that day and keep their radios in tune with Christmas programs and utter a prayer for the war to cease.

Since the Wise Men centuries ago followed the Star in the East and presented the Christ Child with gifts, the spirit of Christmas is recognized as being the appropriate time for giving. So do not forget to give gifts and make your contribution to those who are less fortunate. And remember gifts given in sincerity are only conforming to the spirit of Christmas.

—HATTIE WEBSTER.

ENJOYS READING RECORDER

(From Sgt. Bill Carr, HQ, 16th Bn., Officers Mess, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
 Editor Indpls Recorder.

Dear Sir:
 At this time I take great pleasure in writing you. I am a constant reader and subscriber of your paper. I often read of a number of friends of mine who have visited Indianapolis.

I intended to fly by plane to visit relatives and friends next week for ten days from Fort Bragg, N. C. I've been in the army for two years and have charge of the officers' mess. After my ten-day stay in Indianapolis, I will visit friends in New York City. I am a resident of Indianapolis, the nephew of Mr. and Mrs. Charley Curd, 610 Patterson street.

I will visit your office in the future.

I remain,
SGT. BILL CARR.

White educator fined (\$50) fifty dollars in Alabama for eating with fellow worker, Negro educator, News headline—the sands of time are marked with the tracks of but one noble race of men, wherever you go, the dominant group.

Not all Americans are privileged to help provide Emergency Blood Plasma, News headline, Democracy in action.

There are men who boast of never taking snap judgment, but constantly take a chance with their souls.

Native Son.... Social Document of America's Stepchildren....

By Richard Wright

(Continued From Last Week)

"Mr. Max," the judge said. "You may proceed to call your witnesses."

"The defense does not contest the evidence introduced here," Max said, "I therefore waive the right to call witnesses. As I stated before at the proper time I shall present a plea in Bigger Thomas' behalf."

The judge informed Buckley that he would sum up. For an hour, Buckley commented upon the testimony of the State's witnesses and interpreted the evidence, concluding with the words:

"The intellectual and moral faculties of mankind may as well be declared impotent, if the evidence and testimony submitted by the State are not enough to compel this Court to impose the death sentence upon Bigger Thomas, this despoiler of women."

"Mr. Max, will you be prepared to present your plea tomorrow?" the judge asked.

"I will, Your Honor."

Back in his cell, Bigger tumbled listlessly onto his cot. Soon it'll all be over, he thought. Tomorrow night be the last day; he hoped so. His sense of time was gone; night and day were merged now.

The next morning he was awake in his cell when Max came. On his way to court he wondered what Max would say about him. Could Max really save his life? In the act of thinking the thought, he thrust it from him. If he kept hope from his mind, then whatever happened would seem natural. As he was led down the hall, past windows, he saw that the mob and the troops till surrounded the court house. The building was still jammed with muttering people. Policemen had to make an aisle for him in the crowd.

A pang of fear shot through him when he saw that he had been the first to get to the table. Max was somewhere behind him, lost in the crowd. It was then that he felt more deeply than ever what Max had done to mean to him. He was defenseless now. What was there to prevent those people from coming across these railings and dragging him into the street, now that Max was not here? He sat, not daring to look around, conscious that every eye was upon him. Max's presence during the trial had made him feel that somewhere in that crowd that stared at him so steadily and resentfully was something that he would cling to, if only he could get at it. There smoldered in him the hope that Max had made him feel in the first long talk they had had. But he did not want to risk trying to make it flare into flames now, not with this trial and the words of hate from Buckley. But neither did he snuff it; he nursed it, kept it as his last refuge.

When Max came Bigger saw that his face was pale and drawn. There were dark rings beneath the eyes. Max laid a hand on Bigger's knee and whispered:

"I'm going to do all I can, son." Court opened and the judge said, "Are you ready to proceed, Mr. Max?"

"Yes, Your Honor."

Max rose, ran his hand through his white hair and went to the front of the room. He turned and half-faced the judge and Buckley looking out over Bigger's head to the crowd. He cleared his throat.

"Your Honor, never in my life have I risen in court to make a plea with a former conviction on my heart. I know that what I have to say here today touches the destiny of an entire nation. My plea is for more than one man and one people. Perhaps it is in a manner fortunate that the defendant has committed one of the darkest crimes in our memory; for if we can encompass the life of this man and find out what has happened to him, if we can understand how subtly and yet strongly his life and fate are linked to ours, if we can do this, perhaps, we shall find the key to our future, that rare vantage point upon which every man and woman in this nation can stand and view how inextricably our hopes and fears of today create the exultation and doom of tomorrow."

"Your Honor, I have no desire to be disrespectful to this Court, but I must be honest. A man's life is at stake. And not only is this man a criminal, but he is a black criminal. And as such, he comes into this court under a handicap, notwithstanding our pretensions that all are equal before the law."

"This man is DIFFERENT, even though his crime differs from similar crimes only in degree. The complex forces of society have isolated here for us a symbol, a test symbol. The prejudice of men have stained this symbol, like a germ stained for examination under the microscope. The unremitted hate of men has given us a psychological distance that will enable us to see this tiny social symbol in relation to our whole social organism."

"I say, Your Honor, that the

mere act of understanding Bigger Thomas will be a thawing out of icebound impulses, a dragging of the sprawling forms of dread out of the night of fear into the light of reason, an unveiling of the unconscious ritual of death in which we, like—sleepwalkers, have participated so dream-like and thoughtlessly.

"But I make no excessive claims, Your Honor. I do not deal in magic. I do not say that if we understand this man's life we shall solve all our problems, or that when we have all the facts at our disposal we shall automatically know how to act. Life is not that simple. But I do say that, if, after I have finished, you feel that death is necessary, then you are making an open choice. What I want to do is inject into the consciousness of action open to us and the inevitable consequences flowing from each. And then, if we say death, let us mean it, and if we say life, let us mean that too; but whatever we say, let us know upon what ground we are putting our feet, what the consequences are for us and those whom we judge."

"Your Honor, I would have you believe that I am not insensible to the deep burden of responsibility I am throwing upon your shoulders by the manner in which I have insisted upon conducting the entire degree of his guilt for judgment. But, under the circumstances, what else could I have done?"

"Night after night, I have lain without sleep, trying to think of a way to picture to you and to the world the causes and reasons why this Negro boy sits here a self-confessed murderer. How can I, I asked myself, make the picture of what has happened to this boy show plain a powerful upon a screen of sober reason, when a thousand newspaper and magazine artists have already drawn it in lurid ink upon million sheets of public print? Dare I, deeply mindful of this boy's background and race, put his fate in the hands of a jury (not of his peers, but of an alien and hostile race!) whose minds are already conditioned by the press of the nation; a press which has already suggested the measure of his punishment?"

"No! I could not! So today I come to face this Court, rejecting a trial by jury, willingly entering a plea of guilty, asking in the light of the laws of this state that the boy's life be spared for reasons which I believe affect the foundations of our civilization."

"The most habitual thing for this Court to do is to take the line of least resistance and follow the suggestion of the State's Attorney and say, 'Death!' And that would be the end of this case. But that would not be the end of this crime! That is why this Court must do otherwise."

"There are times, Your Honor, when reality bears features of such an appalling moral complexion that it is impossible to follow the hewn path of expediency. There are times when life's ends are so revealed that reason and sense cry out that we stop and gather them together again before we can proceed."

"What atmosphere surrounds this trial? Are the citizens soberly intent upon seeing that the law is executed? That retribution is dealt out in measure with the offense? That the guilty and only the guilty is caught and punished?"

"No! Every conceivable prejudice has been dragged into this case. The authorities of the city and state deliberately inflamed the public mind to the point where they could not keep the peace without martial law. Responsible to nothing but their own corrupt conscience, the newspapers and the prosecution launched the ridiculous claim that the Communist Party was in some way linked to these two murders. Only here in court yesterday morning did the State's Attorney cease implying that Bigger Thomas was guilty of other crimes which he could not prove."

The hunt for Bigger Thomas served as an excuse to terrorize the entire Negro population, to arrest hundreds of Communists, to raid labor union headquarters and workers' organizations. Indeed, the tone of the press, the silence of the church, the attitude of the temperance and the stimulated nature as to indicate that more than revenge is being sought upon a man who has committed a crime."

"What is the cause of all this high feeling and excitement? Is it the crime of Bigger Thomas? Were Negroes liked yesterday and hated today because of what he has done? Were labor unions and workers' halls raided solely because a Negro committed a crime? Did those white bones lying on the table evoke the gasp of horror that went up from the nation?"

"Your Honor, you know that that is NOT the case! All of the hysteria in the present hysteria existing before Bigger Thomas was evoked by the Negro workers and labor unions were hated as much yesterday as they are today."

"I say, Your Honor, that the

As It APPEARS

By Lowell M. Trice



Frankly, we are much more interested in the bearing such outbreaks may have upon our community relationships in the future, than we are with events surrounding the actual attack. The restaurant manager claims that the Army Officer was intoxicated, therefore, incapable of being serviced. We contend that the tragic affair could very easily have been averted, if drunk or sober, some semblance of democracy had been shown and the hungry soldier given food.

As we see it, the cause of the trouble unquestionably was the management's refusal to acquiesce in the demands of the soldier relative to the food situation. We, therefore, advance as the only satisfactory solution to problems of this nature, and our only guarantee of preventing future outbreaks of the same, is the removal of all color-bars from the downtown area; not specifically eating establishments, but all public places wherever American money, or its equivalent, is accepted for exchange for merchandise or service.

Indianapolis Is a City of "Limited" Opportunities.

INDIANAPOLIS IS A CITY of "limited opportunity" for persons of African descent. The majority of these limitations were unjustly forced upon this minority group by a southern element migrating northward during the turn of the century. Geographically defined Indianapolis is North Centrally located, but too large a portion of its native population has allowed the seeds of racial intolerance to take root within their hearts.

The poorer white southerner during this re-settlement period, almost without exception, insisted upon implanting his customs and ideals upon the community life of his new surroundings. As a result, Indianapolis traditionally "open" soon succumbed to the forces of prejudices, and a predominant southern atmosphere prevailed.

The native white Hoosier didn't object and the Negro was too wrapped up in his daily struggle for existence to pay much attention to what was happening. When the doors of the downtown theatres were shut in his face, he grumbled but did little else.

When Crispus Attucks High School was built and he was told he could no longer send his children to Tech, Shortridge, or Manual, he once again grudgingly accepted the ultimatum.

When the parks and playgrounds, including Riverside, excluded him and his family from participating in their activities, the local sepien once again acquiesced, gratefully accepting Douglas Park for his exclusive usage.

Yes, and when he was told that he couldn't live where he chose; couldn't eat where he had a mind to; couldn't stay at any of the hotels, or participate in this or that program because of his color, the Negro either because he didn't care, or possessed an inferiority complex, meekly bowed down before the god of Jim-Crowism.

Today there are well over seventy thousand colored people living a "half man" existence within this city. Among this group there are not a half-dozen persons fearless and selfless enough to stand up for their God-Given Constitutional rights of free men. There is not one, out of the numerous clubs and organizations willing or capable of assuming this responsibility. And there is not one single individual with any claim of leadership ability, willing to undertake the tremendous task of leading the Children of Ham out of the wilderness of social, political and economic despair.

For how long these unbearable conditions will continue to exist? Only the good Lord Himself knows.

A man may build himself a throne of bayonets, but he cannot sit on it.—Dean Inge.

ity and horror have been committed in this city. Gangsters have killed and have gone free to kill again. But none of that brought forth an indignation to equal this.

"Your Honor, that man did not come here of his own accord! It was INCITED! Until a week ago those people lived their lives as quietly as always."

"Who then fanned this [latent] hate into fury? Whose interest is that thoughtless and misguided mob serving? The State's Attorney knew, for he promised the Loop bankers that if he were re-elected demonstrations for relief would be stopped! The Governor of the state knows, for he pledged the Manufacturers' Association that he would use troops against workers who went out on strike! The Mayor knows, for he told the merchants of the city that the budget would be cut down, that no new taxes would be imposed to satisfy the clamor of the masses of the needy! "There is guilt in the rage that

Today, the clouds may dreary be, Your weary footsteps can find no ease; But, just above the Azure blue, A silver lining will shine thru, too. How to scatter sunshine, what'er you do.

Now, my task on earth is done My weary race, I have run; So cheer up children, do not sigh Meet me in my home on high.

(Continued Next Week)

CONTRIBUTED VERSE

Do Not Sigh

Knoweth thou, I had to leave thee, Yes, I knew you would grieve; Do not sigh, nor pine for me From this world we all must leave.

Today, the clouds may dreary be, Your weary footsteps can find no ease; But, just above the Azure blue, A silver lining will shine thru.

While during my stay here below I tried each passing day to show To loved ones, friends and others, too, How to scatter sunshine, what'er you do.

Now, my task on earth is done My weary race, I have run; So cheer up children, do not sigh Meet me in my home on high.

Pearl E. Reuben